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ABSTRACT

To learn more about the initial effects of word processing on essay-writing performance and on writing apprehension, eight English instructors at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York, conducted a one-semester controlled experiment with freshmen in eight randomly selected college writing classes. Eighty students wrote essays using terminals linked to a mainframe computer (experimental group), while another 80 students wrote essays in the traditional mode using pens, pencils, or typewriters (control group). The eight instructors agreed upon a common syllabus and common teaching approaches for the freshman writing course. To measure writing performance, an analytic scale was devised; to measure writing apprehension, a writing apprehension test developed by J. A. Daly and M. D. Miller was used. Results showed that the experimental group made greater progress than the control group from the pre- to post-essay test, but the same group did not demonstrate superior performance on the six required essays of the course. For writing apprehension, there was no significant difference between the two groups. In addition, the data showed that word processing did not diminish writing quality among new users, despite the fact that the student had to learn new skills and adjust to a new way of writing. (Five tables of data are included, and 25 references, an analytical scale, and a essay rating sheet are attached.) (MS)

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# INITIAL EFFECTS OF WORD PROCESSING ON WRITING QUALITY AND WRITING ANXIETY OF FRESHMAN WRITERS

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## ABSTRACT

Eight English instructors at Marist College, Poughkeepsie, New York, conducted a one-semester controlled experiment with freshmen in eight randomly selected classes of "College Writing" to learn about the initial effects of word processing on essay-writing performance and on writing apprehension. Four classes wrote essays using terminals linked to a mainframe computer (Experimental Group), and four classes wrote essays in the traditional mode using pens, pencils or typewriters (Control Group). The eight instructors agreed upon a common syllabus and common teaching approaches for the freshman writing course. To measure writing performance, they devised an analytic scale. To measure writing apprehension, they used a writing apprehension test developed by Daly and Miller. The Experimental Group showed greater progress than the Control Group from the pre to post Essay Test but could not demonstrate superior performance on the six required essays of the course. For writing apprehension, there was no significant difference between the two groups.

# INITIAL EFFECTS OF WORD PROCESSING ON WRITING QUALITY AND WRITING ANXIETY OF FRESHMAN WRITERS

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## INTRODUCTION

The following is a report of a one-semester study conducted at Marist College to learn about the initial effects of word processing on the writing quality and writing anxiety of 80 freshmen of average writing ability.

In recent years, much has been written about the benefits of word processing for student writers. Among the advantages cited are the following: Word processing allows students to rewrite without recopying, thus motivating them to revise and to become conscious of writing as a process (Daiute, 1983; Collier, 1983; Bean, 1983). It allows students to write more quickly and more closely to the language of their thoughts (Larson, 1984). It increases the quantity of student writing (Daiute, 1983; Sadler and Greene, 1986). It helps make writing a communal experience

in the writing lab as students talk to one another about their work (Sadler and Greene, 1986). It places writing in a fresh context, makes the task of writing more enjoyable and more interesting, thus opening up the possibility for improvement (Feldman, 1984; Teichman, 1985).

In the light of such claims, it is not surprising that more and more teachers are introducing word processing into their writing classes. Indeed, some colleges and universities are having all freshman composition classes use computers in the hope that this tool will help improve student writing skills (for a case history, see Forseth, 1985). The feeling prevails that the computer holds exceptional promise for the teaching of writing. As Stine (1985) observes in her report on a survey of computer use in composition instruction": "I guess the main impression I got after reading through all of the survey responses /a total of 91/ was that in theory we accord computers virtually unlimited potential as a teaching and writing tool." The title of a recent NCTE Publication points to this sense of promise, even if it includes a cautionary note: Computers in the English Program: Promises and Pitfalls, 1984. Enthusiasm for the new tool is reflected in the growing number of journal articles on computers and writing, in the fact that we now have at least one journal devoted to computers and writing, The Computer-Assisted Composition Journal, and at least one textbook on computerized composition, Schwartz's Interactive Writing:

Composition with Word Processing (Holt Rhinehart and Winston, 1985).

Now and then one hears a voice raised against the computer for writing (Hertz, 1983; Gollan, 1984), but the general tone is exceedingly hopeful. Schwartz, composition director at Montclair State College in New Jersey, believes that by giving every student a computer, we can "end the so called 'crisis' in basic writing skills" (1983). Larson, arguing for computer-based composition instruction, concludes that "it is a brave new world of microelectronics, and our strides forward in it must be sure as well as swift (1984). Similarly, the editors of The Computer-Assisted Composition Journal conclude that "Computer-Assisted Composition is a... salvation for basic, developmental, and learning-disabled students" (Sadler and Greene, 1986).

While the enthusiasm for the new writing tool is encouraging, at least two basic questions remain unanswered: First, does word processing actually improve writing? And secondly, does it actually reduce the psychological barriers that many students bring to the writing process? As Bridwell, Nancarrow, and Ross (1984) have observed in their review of the literature on the subject, there has been little research to substantiate claims for the new writing tool. Similarly, Harris (1985), speaking of the "largely unsubstantiated claims" made for word processing, states: "Few existing studies provide useful information about how word processing affects student writing...."

Our study addresses the need for more empirical research on the impact of word processing on student writers. Our objectives were essentially two. We wished to learn about the effects of word processing on writing quality. Will freshmen, newly introduced to word processing, write significantly stronger essays than students using pens, pencils, and typewriters? Or will the introduction of the new tool have a negative or neutral effect on writing quality?

Our second objective related to the issue of writing anxiety. Teachers of writing, journalism, and related fields frequently encounter students who find writing an uncomfortable, punishing, and even fearful experience. Indeed, the typical textbook frequently offers advice to students on gaining confidence in writing. Studies have shown that apprehension about writing is widespread among student writers, that it is a condition that can impede students in their academic work, discourage them from electing advanced writing courses, influence choice of major, and have far-reaching consequences with regard to career choice and self-image (Daly & Miller, 1975; Daly & Shamo, 1976, 1978; Richmond & Dickson, 1980). We wished to learn whether the introduction of word processing reduces or increases writing anxiety in college freshmen. Will the new medium, by placing writing in a new context, divorced from past associations of tedium and frustration for many students, have the effect of lessening writing apprehension?

Or will the new tool have a negative or simply neutral effect on writing apprehension?

We are aware of a controlled experiment (still unpublished) by Cross and Curey (1984) to learn the effects of word processing on student writers in three areas: attitide (including writing anxiety), writing performance, and process (brainstorming, rough-drafting, revision). This study dealt with two issues central to our study--namely writing performance and writing anxiety. The Cross-Curey experiment involved three sections of a required freshman English course at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Each section was split in half. A total of 31 students used microcomputers while the remainder used conventional writing tools. In the words of the authors, the data in this study did not support "any general statements about the effect of word processing on writing." The data showed "that the effect of word processing on writing varies with the writer and overall factors related to the teacher and class."

Our controlled experiment, which avoided split classes and which focused only on writing quality and writing apprehension, involved 80 students using computer terminals in four classes and 80 students in four classes using traditional writing tools. Our study, whose overall design differs from the Cross and Curey study, represents a further effort to measure the impact of word processing on college writers. We believe our results may contribute to an understanding of what word processing can and cannot do for

student writers in the early stages of its use, and may be of assistance to teachers and departments considering the introduction of computer technology into their writing programs.

## PROCESS

Participants:

Eight classes (160 students) were randomly selected from a total of 16 classes of "College Writing" designed for freshmen of average writing ability. At Marist College, students are assigned to "College Writing" on the basis of their SAT verbal scores, their high-school English record, and a Placement Essay Exam. We were thus drawing from a basically homogenous group of students. Of the 8 classes randomly selected from the 16, 4 were randomly designated as the Experimental Group and 4 as the Control Group. The Experimental group thus consisted of 80 freshmen (one-half the selected group) in 4 classes of twenty each who composed, revised, and printed their essays on the computer. These students were given access to IBM 3279 terminals linked to an IBM 4341 mainframe computer. They learned to use a file editor called XEDIT and a formatting program called Waterloo Script. They printed their essays on IBM 3287 matrix printers. Students in the Experimental group had access to 20 terminals from 8:00 AM to midnight every day except Sunday. Students did not report either a

shortage of terminals or insufficient access to the Writing Lab where terminals were housed.

The 160 subjects were reduced to 158 when one student, intimidated by the new medium, requested a transfer to a non-computer section of College Writing and another student dropped out of an Experimental section for reasons unrelated to the computer.

The Control group consisted of 80 freshmen in 4 classes who composed and revised their essays with pens, pencils, and typewriters. None used the computer for the writing of essays. While students in the Experimental Group were writing their essays in a Writing Lab set aside for them only, students in the Control Group wrote in traditional environments. Participating instructors were all teachers of English. They were selected on the basis of their interest in the project and their willingness to work as team members. Once selected, they were randomly assigned either to the Experimental or Control Group, but not to both.

Instruction:

All eight classes followed the same syllabus, designed by the instructors involved in the project. Reading and writing assignments were the same across the eight classes. Students read contemporary essays on a range of humanistic subjects--e.g.,the values we live by, obedience to authority, the impact of fairy tales on children, morality

and the movies, etc. Their essay assignments required them to synthesize, analyze, or critique their readings in 500 words or more. Students were given two weeks to complete each essay.

To encourage revision, instructors in both groups required that a preliminary draft be submitted after the first week of the two-week period. Students using the computer submitted computer printouts of their preliminary drafts. Students in the Control Group submitted handwritten or typed preliminary drafts. A rigorous application of the analytic scale for scoring essays (to be discussed below) further encouraged students to revise their work.

In addition to stressing revision, participating instructors agreed to employ peer criticism in small groups and individual conferences between student and instructor. As much as possible, they sought to make instruction uniform. To encourage consistency of instruction across the eight sections, instructors followed the same session-by-session outline.

Instructors in the Experimental classes departed from this outline by devoting three hours of class time during the first two weeks of the semester to teach their students word processing. They taught their students only what they needed to know to compose, revise, and print the required course essays. While these students were learning word processing, their counterparts in the Control Group were moving ahead with the work of the course. Students in the

Experimental group were thus three hours behind in actual course instruction. Surprisingly, none of the students in the Experimental classes had a prior knowledge of word processing, though approximately one-third had experience with computers in high school.

Tests and Scoring:

Tests for determining differences in writing quality between the two groups were a pre and post essay and six course essays. Tests for determining differences in writing apprehension were a pre and post writing apprehension test.

1. Pre and Post Essay Test:

The pre-test was the freshman Placement Essay--the primary basis for student assignment to "College Writing" (hereafter referred to as the Pre-Essay Test). The post-test was the Final Essay Exam for the course (hereafter referred to as the Post-Essay Test). For each of these tests, the student was required to read an extended passage and then to formulate and develop a thesis in response to the passage. Each essay test was two hours long and hand written. We decided to have students in the Experimental Group write the Post-Essay Test by hand despite their semester-long experience on the computer in order the match the conditions of the Pre-Essay Test.

Each essay test was graded holistically by two instructors other than the student's course instructor.

Instructors agreed upon the features or dimensions to be evaluated and came together for a practice grading session prior to actual grading. (The features agreed upon were essentially the same as those used for the evaluation of the course essays discussed below.) For the Pre and Post Essay Test, there was no scoring of separate features. Each insructor assigned an overall score of 1-6 to the student essay, the composite score thus ranging from 2-12. Instructors met to design a Post-Essay Test they believed was comparable in difficulty to the Pre-Essay Test.

2. Course Essays

A series of six essays were assigned during the semester. These were scored somewhat differently from the Pre and Post Essay Test. The eight instructors cooperatively developed an analytic scale (see Fagan, Cooper, and Jensen 1975; Cooper 1977), for the evaluation of the six expository essays of the course. This scale described in non-technical language what the instructors considered to be high, mid, and low quality levels for each of five features included in the evaluation: content, organization, sentence structure, diction, and mechanics (comprising grammar, punctuation, and spelling). (See Appendix A.) The scale also specified a range of scores for each of the quality levels.

Students in both groups received copies of the analytic scale and were thus made aware of how their essays were

being judged and scored. Students were also encouraged to use the scale as a checklist during the revising and editing stages of their writing. They also used it as a guide for responding in small groups to the essays of fellow students.

On a rating sheet attached to each student essay, instructors assigned a score ranging from 1 (very poor) to 7 (excellent) for performance in each of the five features. (See Appendix B for Rating Sheet.) The highest cumulative score for an essay was thirty-five; the lowest, seven. The sub-scoring for each feature served a double purpose. For purposes of research, it permitted a comparison of the performance of Experimental and Control Group in each of the five features evaluated. Such scoring could, for example, tell us whether students in the Experimental Group wrote more organized essays or essays stronger in content than students in the Control Group. For purposes of teaching, the sub-scores provided students and instructors with a more accurate diagnosis than would a cumulative score by itself.

As Cooper (1977) points out, an analytic scale has its limitations. It may not be sensitive to all the variations which can occur in pieces written in the same mode, but it is nevertheless highly useful as a "general or global guide for responding to a piece of writing." We have already commented on its usefullness to students for revision, for peer criticism, and for its clear statement of the criteria by which writing in the course is being judged.

To insure valid and reliable measurement of student

writing, the eight English instructors--of similar background academically and experientially--met every two weeks for practice grading sessions (one hour or more) during which they applied the analytic scale to sample papers like those they were about to score. In time, the instructors became increasingly aligned in their evaluations, thus confirming Coffman's observation (1971): "In general, when made aware of discrepancies, teachers tend to move their own ratings in the direction of the average ratings of the group. Over a period of time, the ratings of the staff as a group tend to become more reliable." The group's grading of 21 sample papers over the course of the semester yielded an inter-rater reliability of .94 using Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

4. Writing Apprehension Test (WAI)

This 26 item instrument (reliability coefficient .921) was developed by Daly and Miller (1975). The Writing Apprehension Test measures the degree to which an individual associates writing with fear, anxiety, and failure, or with pleasure, satisfaction, and success. The student is asked to agree with, disagree with, or state his/her uncertainty about statements like the following:

I avoid writing.

I have no fear of my writing being evaluated.

I look forward to writing down my ideas.

I am afraid of writing essays.

Taking a composition course is a very frightening experience.

Handing in a composition makes me feel good.

Scores on this test can range from a low of 26 (high apprehension) to a high of 130 (low apprehension). The pre-test was administered during the first week of the semester, the post-test during the last. Pre and post tests were identical.

To ascertain differences between the two groups in writing quality and writing apprehension, analyses of covariance were employed. The effects of the pre-condition (pre-test) were thus statistically removed from the post-condition (post-test) prior to comparison of the two groups. Heuristically, step-wise multiple regression was employed to assess the contribution of predictor demographic variables to the criterion variable (post-test score). In addition, a Repeated Measures analysis was employed to observe the pattern of progress of each group. An alpha level of .05 was used to determine significance in all the statistical tests employed.

## RESULTS

Mean scores for each group on pre and post Essay and Writing Apprehension tests are listed in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here.

The statistics listed in Table 1 reveal a greater gain from pre to post scores for the Experimental Group in writing ability. However, the Analysis of Covariance revealed no significant difference in writing ability between the groups (see Table 2).

Insert Table 2 about here.

From Table 2, we conclude that though the Experimental Group evidenced greater gain than the Control Group, the variation fell within the realm of chance. This conclusion is based on the fact that the probability of the F ratio is greater than .05, which was determined at the outset to be the indicator of significance.

Hence, though it cannot be concluded that students write significantly stronger essays when using word processing, it can be concluded that computer intervention did not adversely affect the Experimental Group.

To answer the second research question, will word processing reduce or increase writing anxiety in college freshmen, statistics in Table 1 reveal that the Experimental Group showed reduced anxiety whereas the Control Group showed an increase in anxiety. However, a second Analysis of Covariance using the pre and post WAT scores revealed no statistically significant differences between the groups. Again, the probability of the F ratio is greater than .05

(see Table 3).

Insert Table 3 about here.

One could conjecture that, in addition to treatment (computer use vs. no computer use), demographic variables such as sex, SAT verbal score, instructor, and status as resident or non-resident student would impact on performance and therefore confound the results. Consequently, these variables were entered into a step-wise Multiple Regression as predictors on the criterion variable, the post WAT score. No significant contribution was found for any of the predictors.

Comparison of Performance on Six Course Essays:

There were no significant differences between the two groups in the total scores across the six essays for Content, Organization, Sentence Structure, and Diction, as tested by one-way Analysis of Variance. A significant difference appeared only in the area of Mechanics, where the Control Group was the stronger group. Mean scores for each of the five features, by group, appear in Table 4.

Insert Table 4 about here.

Repeated Measures Analysis for the Six Course Essays:

The two groups revealed disparate performance curves based on a Repeated Measures Analysis. The scores of the Control Group for each of the five features exhibited general linear progression, whereas the scores of the Experimental Group for each feature exhibited curvilinearity. Mean scores for each group, by feature, across the six essays appear in Table 5.

Insert Table 5 about here.

The performance pattern, as scored, showed a greater number of spurts and plateaus for the Experimental Group. The Experimental Group tended to show significant progress earlier than the Control Group, which was surprising given the need to learn word processing. For whatever reasons, however, the Experimental Group was unable to sustain growth between essay assignments 2 and 3 as well as between assignments 4 and 5, a condition which warrants further investigation.

## CONCLUSIONS

Given our data, we cannot conclude a clearly positive

effect for the one-semester period. What is clear from our data is that word processing does not diminish writing quality among new users, despite the fact that the student must learn new skills and adjust to a new way of writing. Thus the unpublished Cross and Curey study mentioned earlier, which could not establish superior writing performance in an experimental group of freshman using microcomputers, supports our findings.

Repeated measures analysis revealed dissimilar growth patterns for the two groups--a linear pattern for the Control Group and a curvilinear pattern for the Experimental Group. We are not prepared to comment on the significance of this difference. Is curvilinearity a generalizable condition for new users of word processing or is it unique to the single situation? Replication in this area seems desirable.

Results obtained in the area of writing performance lead us to an important question. Would students using word processing longer than a single semester show an improvement in essay-writing greater than that of a comparable group not using computers for writing? It seems reasonable to assume that more than one semester is needed to become fully comfortable with the new medium. And it is equally reasonable to assume that more than one semester is needed to use fully the resources of word processing for revision--the kind of revision that goes beyond words and phrases and is more substantive than cosmetic (Pufahl, 1984). While

teachers in our study coached students in how to revise an essay and attempted to show them how to use word processing to make substantial changes in a text--changes affecting content and organization--it may take more than a semester for such instruction to have a positive impact on the writing process.

Regarding writing apprehension, we found no significant difference between the two groups. Once again, the Cross and Curey study, which could not conclude a reduction of writing apprehension in its experimental group, supports our findings. On the other hand, the introduction of word processing did not increase writing apprehension for students in the Experimental Group, despite the fact that these students, unlike their peers in the Control Group, had to learn word processing in a short space of time and had to produce computer-written essays on a strict time schedule.

The question of time seems relevant to writing apprehension as it is to writing performance, especially since apprehension for the task--learning the skill of word processing--can be an intervening factor. Does it take more than a semester to experience the convenience and time-saving nature of word processing in a way that would significantly reduce writing anxiety? If, as the results indicate, pre-existing writing skills and writing anxiety are too well established to be impacted significantly in one semester, perhaps more time is needed to generate change. Again, a study of longer duration than ours, or a

longitudinal inquiry of the study subjects, is called for.

Responses to a questionnaire given to students in the Experimental Group at the end of the semester showed that a large majority (87%) enjoyed using the computer for writing essays (Teichman, 1985). Typical comments: "I cannot say whether the computer has helped my writing, but it has made both the course and the writing assignments more enjoyable." Another student wrote: "The use of the computer makes the course more interesting." And another: "I feel that my writing may improve because I really enjoy using the computer." Still another: "I must say that my overall attitude toward writing has improved. I look forward to, or at least don't dread, writing essays." Such representative comments cannot be seen as unimportant.

Though our study could not demonstrate significant improvement in essay-writing or reduced writing anxiety for a one-semester period as a result of computer intervention, the enthusiastic response of most students using word processing is for us an important reason to encourage computer use in our writing program. If the computer makes writing a less onerous, more satisfying experience for many students, there is at least the possibility that improvement in writing will follow. Positive attitudes generally lead to positive results.

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Table 1

Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores by Group

| Group | Pre-essay Mean | Pre-essay SD | Post-essay Mean | Post-essay SD | Pre-WAT Mean | Pre-WAT SD | Post-WAT Mean | Post-WAT SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Exper. | 3,97 | .74 | 6.07 | 1.86 | 74.8 | 25.08 | 81.5 | 26.53 |
| Control | 4.25 | .70 | 5.68 | 1.86 | 82.0 | 16.77 | 76.3 | 30.96 |

Table 2

Analysis of Covariance Results on Tests of Writing Ability

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | DF | Mean Square | F | Signif of F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Main effects | 6.467 | 2 | 3.233 | 0.930 | 0.397 |
| Grp | 6.432 | 1 | 6.432 | 1.850 | 0.176 |
| Pre (covar) | 0.087 | 1 | 0.087 | 0.025 | 0.875 |
| Explained | 6.467 | 2 | 3.234 | 0.930 | 0.397 |
| Residual | 538.991 | 155 | 3.477 | | |
| Total | 545.458 | 157 | 3.474 | | |

Table 3

Analysis of Covariance Results on Tests of Writing Apprehension

| Source of Variation | Sum of Squares | DF | Mean Square | F | Signif of F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Covariates | 0.016 | 1 | 0.016 | 0.061 | 0.805 |
| WAT1 | 0.016 | 1 | 0.016 | 0.061 | 0.805 |
| Main Effects | 13.208 | 55 | 0.240 | 0.915 | 0.634 |
| WAT2 | 13.208 | 55 | 0.240 | 0.915 | 0.634 |
| Explained | 13.224 | 56 | 0.236 | 0.899 | 0.660 |
| Residual | 21.268 | 81 | 0.236 | | |
| Total | 34.492 | 137 | 0.252 | | |

Table 4

Cumulative Mean Scores in Five Features of Essay Writing, Both Groups

| Dimension | Exper. Group | Control Group |
|---|---|---|
| Content | 23.0 | 23.1 |
| Organization | 23.2 | 23.0 |
| Sentence Structure | 22.4 | 23.5 |
| Diction | 22.1 | 23.7 |
| Mechanics | 18.5 | 21.3 |

Table 5

Repeated Mean Scores of Essay Features by Group for Six Essays

| Feature | Essay # | Exper. Group | Control Group |
|---|---|---|---|
| Content | 1 | 3.85 | 3.43 |
| | 2 | 3.85 | 3.69 |
| | 3 | 3.50 | 3.94 |
| | 4 | 3.94 | 3.96 |
| | 5 | 3.60 | 3.99 |
| | 6 | 4.30 | 4.21 |
| Organization | 1 | 3.99 | 3.40 |
| | 2 | 3.90 | 3.70 |
| | 3 | 3.44 | 3.89 |
| | 4 | 4.00 | 3.75 |
| | 5 | 3.80 | 4.08 |
| | 6 | 4.10 | 4.36 |
| Sent. Struc. | 1 | 3.82 | 3.46 |
| | 2 | 3.64 | 3.80 |
| | 3 | 3.26 | 3.93 |
| | 4 | 4.10 | 3.90 |
| | 5 | 3.53 | 4.06 |
| | 6 | 4.06 | 4.30 |
| Diction | 1 | 3.85 | 3.59 |
| | 2 | 3.56 | 3.86 |
| | 3 | 3.31 | 3.90 |
| | 4 | 3.91 | 3.89 |
| | 5 | 3.45 | 4.01 |
| | 6 | 4.06 | 4.31 |
| Mechanics | 1 | 3.05 | 3.23 |
| | 2 | 3.17 | 3.54 |
| | 3 | 2.80 | 3.63 |
| | 4 | 3.45 | 3.59 |
| | 5 | 2.68 | 3.66 |
| | 6 | 3.37 | 3.80 |

ANALYTIC SCALE

| SCORES | CONTENT | ORGANIZATION | SENTENCE STRUCTURE | DICTION | GRAMMAR PUNCTUATION SPELLING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Rhetorical & Logical Development | | | |
| HIGH<br>7-6 | A significant central idea clearly defined, and supported with concrete, substantial, and consistent relevant detail | Essay planned so that it progresses by clearly ordered and necessary stages, and developed with originality and consistent attention to proportion and emphasis; paragraphs coherent, unified, and effectively developed; transitions between paragraphs explicit and effective | Sentences skillfully constructed (unified, coherent, forceful, effectively varied) | Distinctive: fresh precise, economical, and idiomatic | Clarity and effectiveness of expression promoted by consistent use of standard grammar, punctuation, and spelling |
| MID<br>5-3 | Central idea apparent but trivial, or trite, or too general; supported with concrete detail, but detail that is occasionally repetitious, irrelevant, or sketchy | Plan and method of essay apparent but not consistently fulfilled; developed with only occasional disproportion or inappropriate emphasis; paragraphs unified, coherent, usually effective in their development; transitions between paragraphs clear but abrupt, mechanical, or monotonous | Sentences correctly constructed but lacking distinction | Appropriate: clear and idiomatic | Clarity and effectiveness of expression weakened by occasional deviations from standard grammar, punctuation and spelling |

ANALYTIC SCALE (cont.)

| | CONTENT | ORGANIZATION | SENTENCE STRUCTURE | DICTION | GRAMMAR PUNCTUATION SPELLING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Rhetorical & Logical Development | | | |
| LOW<br>2-1 | Central idea lacking, or confused, or unsupported with concrete and relevant detail | Plan and purpose of essay not apparent, undeveloped or developed with irrelevance, redundancy, or inconsistency; paragraphs incoherent, not unified, or undeveloped; transitions between paragraphs unclear or ineffective | Sentences not unified, incoherent, fused, incomplete, monotonous or childish | Inappropriate vague, unidiomatic, or substandard | Communication obscured by frequent deviations from standard grammar, punctuation, and spelling |

STUDENT I.D. _____

COLLEGE WRITING, CORE 106 — ESSAY RATING SHEET

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. A thesis substantially developed (content) | | ✓ | | | | | |
| 2. Logical organization | | ✓ | | | | | |
| 3. Varied and forceful sentence structure | | | | ✓ | | | |
| 4. Precise, economical, and idiomatic diction | | | | ✓ | | | |
| 5. Correctness in spelling, punctuation, grammar and documentation | — | | | ✓ | | | |

General Comment:

JOHN:

SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE IN SENTENCE STRUCTURE, DICTION, AND MECHANICS — BUT NOTE SERIOUS WEAKNESSES IN CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION.

(1) YOUR CONTENT IS WEAKENED BY INSUFFICIENT SUPPORT OF YOUR THESIS. PROVIDE ILLUSTRATIVE DETAIL.

(2) REGARDING ORGANIZATION, NOTE THAT YOUR OPENING PARAGRAPH PROMISES A PLAN THAT YOU DO NOT FOLLOW IN YOUR PAPER.